



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

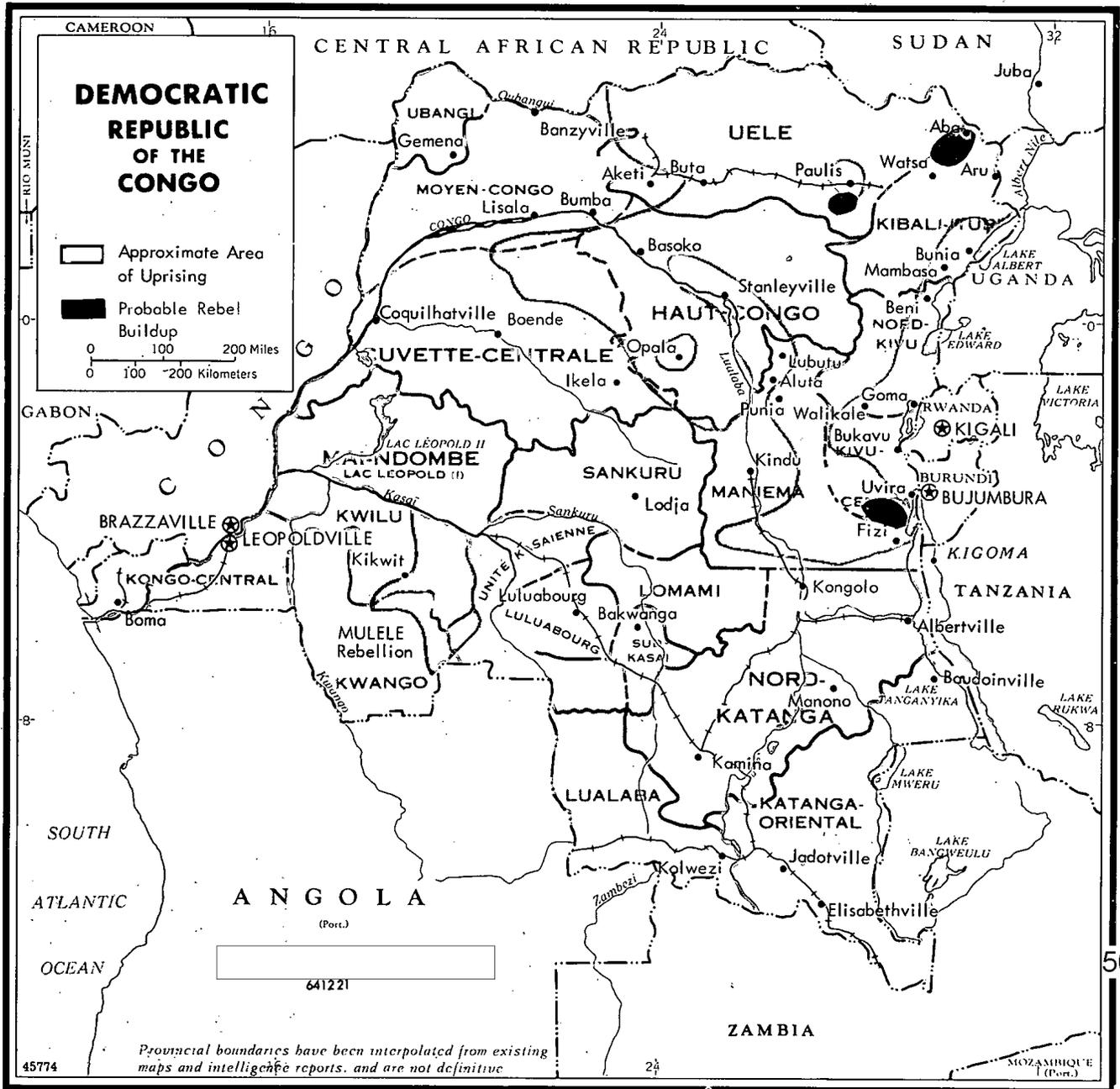
THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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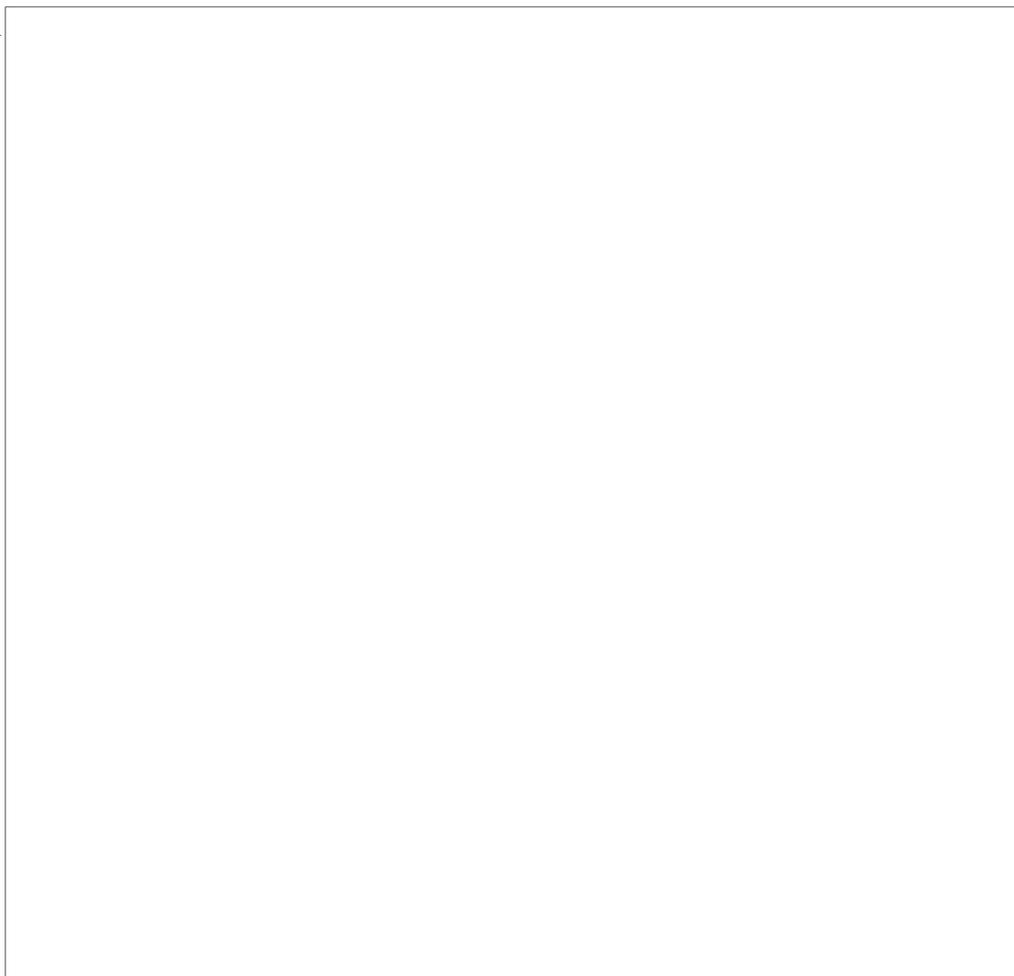
23 DECEMBER 1964

~~TOP SECRET~~



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DAILY BRIEF
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1. South Vietnam

Khanh still has the backing of the generals, but there is an undercurrent of uneasiness among them that his behavior endangers US support. Prime Minister Huong has not tried to pin Khanh down. He has a lingering desire to deal first with his Buddhist tormentors. The Viet Cong has been repositioning units in the Saigon area. This has been going on for some weeks, and it could reflect no more than an effort to avoid government pacification drives. A dramatic attack on government installations, however, is possible.

2. Congo

The Congolese leaders still show little signs of realizing how precarious their military situation is, or of having a coherent policy. Tshombé, just returned from Europe, is instead talking grandly of rebuilding the Congo "from the ground up." A survey of the situation is at Annex 1. (See map.)

3. Indonesia

[redacted] Indonesian regulars are being moved to the Borneo border area and [redacted] to areas of Sumatra hard by the Malay Peninsula. [redacted] these shifts [redacted] are sure to increase tensions. [redacted]

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4. West Germany

Erhard welcomes the signs he sees of a slight warming in US-French relations. This [redacted] will help pave the way for a meeting among US, French, German, and British chiefs of state.

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5. Italy

The protracted presidential election, with a record of 14 unsuccessful ballots, has brought the fragile Moro government near the breaking point. He is threatening to resign, and the Nenni socialists say they will revert to the opposition. There is still a little room for compromise, but the infighting so far may well leave irreparable damage on the center-left experiment.

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ANNEX 1

A Survey of the Congo Situation

There is no significant change in the generally somber security picture. Mercenary-led government forces continue active in the northeast, but several of these small government columns are at the extreme limit of supply lines, and cannot adequately garrison liberated points.



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Diplomatic pressure on Tshombé remains strong. Representatives of five radical African states were to meet in Uganda today to discuss Ghana's proposal to recognize the Congolese rebel government. The



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Back in Leopoldville from his aid-raising trip to Europe, Tshombé says he is going to talk with President Kasavubu about improving the Congo's standing with other African governments. There is still some doubt, however, that he intends to go beyond the talking stage.



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The possibilities of broadening the government are not bright, even if Tshombé were persuaded to try. The leading candidate, former premier Adoula, has probably made himself ineligible by his recent public statements implicitly critical of Tshombé's policies. Moreover, Interior Minister Munongo's recent use of his powers of arrest to even scores with old rivals and political enemies has probably frightened off other political interests not now represented in the government.

In the circumstances, Tshombé's relations with Belgium are critical. Belgian Ambassador der Kerchove has returned to Brussels to consult on continued aid to the Congo.

Tshombé's announced policy of expropriating Belgian-held shares in industrial enterprises in the Congo could cause a break in relations. Talks on the policy are scheduled in Brussels in January.

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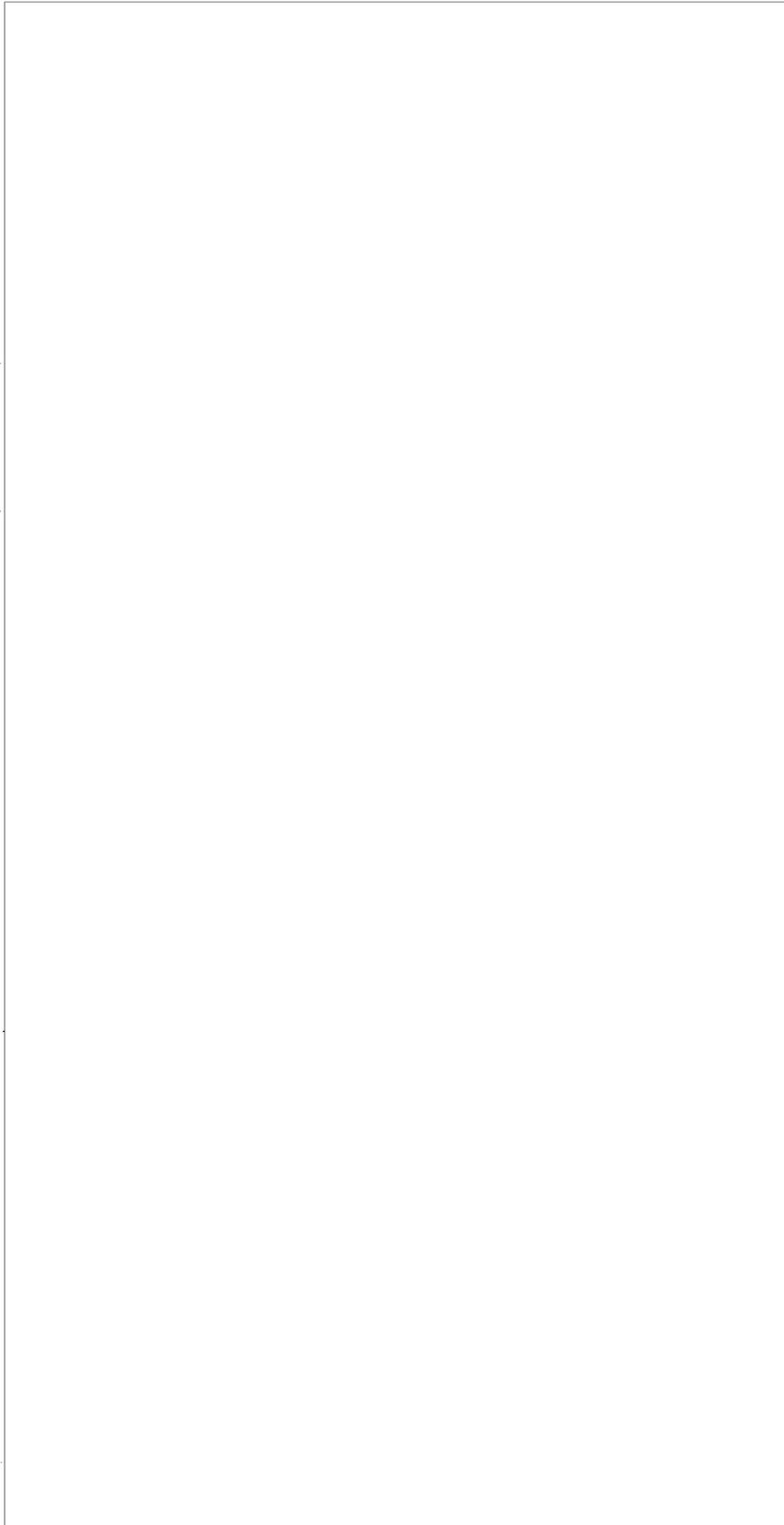


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